



THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT LOADS OF INVOLVEMENT ON EFL STUDENTS' INCIDENTAL LEARNING OF IDIOMS

Mehrnoush Ataafarin,

Ghasem Aghajanzadeh Kiasi¹

Department of English Language, Islamic Azad University,
Rasht Branch, Rasht, Iran

Abstract:

Idioms are essential parts of any language learning that indicate second language proficiency of learners in their communication. However, there is no doubt that idioms are more difficult to learn and comprehend than usual words or phrases. The present study investigated the possible effects of providing different task types with involvement loads on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL students' learning of idiom. A total number of 60 EFL students were selected based on their performance on Quick Placement Test and idiom familiarity test. The participants were randomly divided into three groups each containing 20 students. The data gathered through conducting pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest of L2 idioms were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of one way ANOVA and Paired samples *t*-test. The findings revealed that tasks with higher involvement load led to better performance of students both in initial learning and the retention of idioms. The findings would hopefully encourage teachers and learners to use tasks with deeper cognitive processing and higher involvement load to have more effective learning of English idioms.

Keywords: English idioms, involvement load, different task types, EFL students

1. Introduction

Idioms are ubiquitous and crucial to everyday communication. They help language users express their personal affection, passion, and attitude. Being able to use idioms

¹ Correspondence: email aghajanzadeh@iaurasht.ac.ir

properly is one of the key factors that the user has reached native or near-native-likeness that is the ultimate achievement of L2 users. Even though complete mastery of idioms may be nearly impossible, every language learner must be prepared to meet the challenges since they frequently occur in spoken and written discourse. In addition, the importance of understanding idioms is highlighted through the argument that they *"are present in academic settings; therefore, the failure to comprehend idioms could impact academic performance-reading comprehension, written composition, and vocabulary"* (Lundblom & Woods, 2012, p. 203).

McCarthy, O'Keeffe, and Walsh (2010) believe that idioms are widely utilized in English, both spoken and written, and language learners must make high efforts to master idioms. In addition, Adkins (1968) notes that idiomatic expressions construct the heart of the English language that gives it color, feeling, charm, and precision. Thus, being capable of understanding and using idioms appropriately is vital to enjoying a good command of the depth of vocabulary in the English language (Milton, 2009), and knowledge of idioms draw a high parallel with learners vocabulary repertoire (McGavigan, 2009).

Grant and Bauer (2004) consider idioms as multi-word lexemes, and the meaning of idioms cannot be worked out from study of the individual words making the idioms. Idioms frequently operate on a metaphorical level. Carter, Goddard, Reah, Sanger, and Bowring (2001) argue that idioms present very real problems to learners of a language as it is not always possible for listeners or readers to recognize that an idiom exists, and they may assume the literal meaning.

There is no doubt that language learners have grave problems producing correct language idiomatically. Burke (1998) claims that *"knowledge of slang and idioms is fundamental to nonnative speakers' understanding of the language that native speakers actually use"* (p. 5). D'Angelo Bromley (1984) agrees with this statement and remarks that *"idioms add confusion and difficulty to learning of language and so they occupy a special place in the teaching of language and reading"* (p. 272).

Idiomatic expressions usually put non-native speakers in hot water both in written and oral contexts. On the one hand, EFL learners encounter difficulties utilizing idioms and they often prefer to avoid them. On the other hand, material writers and language teachers find it difficult to develop effective materials and teach them effectively so that they relegate idioms to have a subsidiary place in syllabus. In addition, owing to inconclusive research findings in this area of study and lack of crystal clear answers as to how to teach and learn idioms, addressing the question if different tasks with different loads in idiom learning classes will lead to better learning and retention of idioms may shed some light on ambiguities.

Additionally, the complexity of learning idioms within language learning is another reason why teachers need to explain and teach idioms to students. D'Angelo Bromley (1984), for example, writes that idioms *"add confusion and difficulty to the learning of language"* (p. 272). Lundblom and Woods (2012) further explain that idioms *"occur frequently in classroom language. Students with literacy or language weaknesses are often challenged by idioms; therefore, the failure to comprehend idioms can impact academic performance"* (p. 202). Moreover, Burke (1998) mentions that teaching students about and explaining nonliteral language thoroughly in school is preferable to students hearing this type of language outside of the classroom. Outside of an educational environment the risk of the student misunderstanding an idiom, for example, is higher. The student might end up in a situation where he or she uses the idiom in the wrong context and gets into trouble or an awkward situation because of it.

Historically, researchers and teachers have always been trying to design and create various pedagogical tasks that can affect effectively L2 learning process. Involvement Load Hypothesis (ILH) developed by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001a), more of a vocabulary learning hypothesis, is the one that claims the retention of forms (words) in incidental learning situations depends on the degree of manipulation of the cognitive and motivational variables within tasks required of an L2 learner to perform.

According to Martinez-Fernandez (2008), ILH posits that incidental tasks that induce higher involvement are conducive to the type of processing that is deemed crucial for vocabulary retention. She adds that retention of unfamiliar words is claimed to be conditional upon the amount of involvement while processing these words. Involvement is operationalized by tasks designed to vary in the degree of need, search, and evaluation.

The probable effects of ILH on learning idioms among Iranian English language learners have not yet been known, and few research has been done in EFL situations in the area of task-induced involvement and the effect it may have on Iranian EFL learners' learning. Although Iranian foreign language learners study idioms either as a separate main course or as a supplementary material alongside with reading comprehension courses, their use of idioms, both in academic and nonacademic settings, is rarely found. Thus, the researchers believe that putting the learning and teaching of idioms in the framework of ILH may shed some light on the process of learning and teaching idioms in different task types.

Idioms need to be learned so that the students can develop fluency and fully understand the target language. The question remains, though, if idiomatic expressions should be taught explicitly or could be learned incidentally. The present study investigates what types of tasks can be used when teaching idiomatic expressions to

learners of English to find a solution to the problem of learning idioms among the Iranian English language learners. Therefore, it asks if task-induced involvement has any significant effect on the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' initial learning and later retention of English idiom by proposing the null hypothesis that task-induced involvement has no statistically significant effect on the Iranian initial learning and retention of English idiom.

2. Review of literature

There have been few studies on such complex lexis (AgustínLlach, 2011; Zarei & Koosha, 2003). Furthermore, studies as to which tasks of idioms might be more facilitating for the English language learners to master seems to be rather limited. McCarthy, O'Keeffe, and Walsh (2010) report that learners with different proficiency levels encounter some problems with their vocabulary including idioms-an integral part of the vocabulary - especially in their production. Regarding the effect of different contexts on learning idioms and the interaction between contexts-based idiom learning and EFL learners' language proficiency, Atai and Akbarian (2003) found that exposing learners to idioms in multiple contexts would lead to more effective learning of the different syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic aspects of idioms.

Laufer (2000) investigated whether avoidance of L2 (English) idioms is determined by the degree of similarity to their L1 (Hebrew) counterparts. Four degrees of similarity (total formal similarity, partial formal similarity, lack of formal similarity, and distributional similarity) were established through a three conceptual, formal, and distributional dimensional framework for L1 and L2 comparison. The results showed that L2 idioms were not avoided as a category, and L2 proficiency was an avoidance-inducing factor. More specifically, the research showed that not all L2 idioms were avoided, especially if they had L1 equivalents or could be expressed in different words that were still idiomatic in L1. However, L2 learners avoided English idioms that were only partially translatable into L1 or that were non-idiomatic in L1.

Peng's (2011) experiment on the effects of task-induced involvement load on idiom learning that was done on 93 Chinese high school learners of English showed that that the involvement load did have effect on idiom learning, and a higher involvement load did result in better retention of idioms than a lower involvement load. In a word, if the induced involvement load is higher, the idioms will be memorized better. Therefore, Peng's study verifies that ILH is applicable to English idiom learning, and the results are consistent with the assumptions proposed by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001b).

In another experiment, conducted by Peng (2012) on the effects of text-based tasks with varying involvement loads on 290 Chinese college students' incidental acquisition of idioms. It was found that Chinese college students are possibly to acquire idioms incidentally through text-based tasks with varying involvement loads. However, the main theory of ILH was partially supported: tasks with higher involvement loads do not necessarily yield better all the time in idiom retention. Moreover, task carrying cultural characteristics of idioms can foster incidental acquisition of idioms.

Another type of activity involves teaching idioms as metaphors through conceptual metaphors. *"Researchers have systemized idioms based on their common concepts"* and the idioms are motivated conceptually by general knowledge of the world (Chen & Lai, 2013, p. 15). For example, a connection between fire and anger in idioms can be found. This has been useful for improving meaning comprehension and *"extends retention of the expressions learned. Nevertheless, it is not always easy to find the patterns and connections between the idiomatic expressions. If learners fail to do this, they will misunderstand the idiom in question. Also, it is more difficult for EFL learners to comprehend 'metaphor-based expressions whose conceptual metaphors were distinct from their native language'"* (Chen & Lai, 2013, p. 16).

In their study, Chen and Lai (2013) suggest teaching idioms in an alternative cognitive-oriented manner, *"by incorporating the idea of metaphoric mappings"* (p. 13). In addition to Chen and Lai's (2013) article, Boers (2001) explains that the 'traditional' view, where figurative idioms were seen as dead expressions needed to be memorized, has been questioned. *"Cognitive semantics offers the prospect of more systematic and insightful learning of vast numbers of figurative expressions"* (p. 35).

In general, language is more or less idiomatic. Therefore, as Irujo (as cited in Noroozi, 2013) states, the learning and teaching of idioms must be regarded as an integral part of vocabulary learning and teaching. There is general consensus in the literature that students learn idioms as they do vocabulary. That is, they select and actively learn idioms that will be useful to them. For instance, Carey (as cited in Noroozi, 2013) found that very few exposures to a new word were necessary for children to learn something about its meaning. Sometimes, we can enhance comprehension of a text containing difficult words by instructing the difficult words in the text as well as involving multiple exposures to the words in context (Stahl, as cited in Noproozi, 2013). Also, in a study on the probable effect of different contexts on learning idioms as well as the interaction between learning idioms in different contexts and EFL learners' language proficiency, Atai and Akbarian (2003) found that exposure to idioms in multiple contexts would result in more effective learning of the different aspects of idioms, such as the syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic features, etc.

3. Methods and materials

This study was done using a quantitative research through a descriptive-analytic method to test whether task-induced involvement would have any effect on the learning and retention of English idioms. The participants included 60 students of English language translation course (5th semester), at pre-intermediate level, at Rasht Islamic Azad University, Iran, with 46 females and 14 males with an average age range of 21.42. Of the original number of participants (92), 73 students were chosen as pre-intermediates through QPT for the purpose of the study, but 13 were excluded due to their prior knowledge of two or more targeted idioms. The participants were randomly assigned into three experimental tasks of multiple choice items, fill-in-the blanks, and sentence making tests, with 20 students in each class. Each group was required to do a different task type; that is, based on the type of the task, the students were divided to task one, task two, and task three.

Having the level of general language proficiency of students checked at the beginning of the study and to ensure their homogeneity through a Quick Placement Test (QPT), 15 targeted idioms were chosen from the input text, namely *My successful friend* taken from Beare's (2013) book, *Learning idioms in context*. The idioms were chosen based on their common theme, understandability, and relatedness to the students' personal experience.

The experiment was conducted in two sessions over a two-week period. To ensure that the participants were not familiar with the targeted idioms, a test comprising the targeted idioms in the tasks was taken. The participants were asked to either provide the meaning of the idioms in Persian or write 'yes' or 'no' for the idioms they had previously met or had not. Those participants who knew the meaning of the idioms or had previously seen them were excluded from the study. Accordingly, there left 60 out of 73 students who were randomly divided in three 20 students of multiple choice items, fill-in-the blanks, and sentence making classes. The targeted idioms used were: *Big Apple*, *blow smoke*, *carved in stone*, *dog and pony show*, *genuine article*, *go places*, *hotbed of something*, *ins and outs*, *keep one's nose clean*, *on tap*, *rain on someone's parade*, *reinvent the wheel*, *smart cookie*, *squeaky clean*, and *brownie points*.

To avoid generating any memory traces, immediately after the idiom familiarity test that led to the real pool of students in each group, the test papers were distributed among the students and they were asked to do the tasks designed. The first two groups had to perform input-oriented tasks, multiple-choice and fill-in the blank tests. However, the task for the third group was output-oriented with a different involvement load.

Having completed the tasks, an immediate posttest comprising the same idioms but at different order was unexpectedly conducted to all groups collectively to ascertain the initial learning of the targeted idioms. In addition, a delayed posttest was administered to all three groups two weeks later to determine the long-term retention of the targeted idioms. Since time-on-task is regarded as an inherent property of a task (Hulstijn and Laufer, 2001b), and since the study was to investigate the retention effects of tasks, no attempt was made to control for time-on-task. However, the time estimated was approximately 21, 29, and 40 minutes for the first, second, and third task, respectively. It needs to be mentioned that tests for task 1, multiple-choice tests, and 2, fill-in-the-blank were scored based on correct and incorrect item response criterion. However, the test in the third task was productive, and the meaning conveyance was particularly important inasmuch as the idioms were correctly, semantically, used in the sentence(s).

According to ILH, the involvement load is determined by three components of need, search, and evaluation that can be present or absent in a learning task. If a component is absent, it is indicated as (0). (1), and (2) are used to indicate the moderate and strong presence of a component, respectively. The moderate presence is shown by (+) and strong presence is marked by (+ +). In the present study, the involvement load is investigated via three experimental groups with different types of tasks.

4. Tasks

Task one students were provided with the idiom test in MC format, no meanings and explanations attached, but they were allowed to look them up in their dictionaries. They were, then, required to recognize the right idiom in the text with questions given in the multiple-choice format. Since using dictionary to figure out the meaning of the idioms was necessary in this task, the three main components of involvement load, *need*, *search* and *evaluation* were present. Hence, based on the ILH, the involvement index of the first task was 3 (+ (1) need, + (1) search, + (1) evaluation) (See appendix C1).

Task two students were provided with the same idioms but were required to fill in the blanks with appropriate idioms given collectively in random order at the end of the test along with some extra unrelated idioms. In this task, there was no search component since students were provided with the definitions and explanation of the idioms, and they did not have to look the idioms up in a dictionary. However, the need component was moderate, because it was externally induced. In order to fill in the blanks correctly, the idioms provided by the researcher at the end of the test had to be evaluated against each other to decide on their contextual appropriateness. Hence, the

evaluation component was also moderate. According to ILH, the involvement index of the second task was 2 (+ (1) need, (0) search, + (1) evaluation) (See appendix C2).

The same idioms, with their definitions and explanations, in English and Persian, in a separate piece of paper, were given to the students of task three. Then, they were asked to make their own sentences using the idioms. Their production could be at sentence level or they were allowed to combine some sentences together to form a paragraph in which two or more idioms could be used. Grammaticality did not matter; what mattered was the message the students intended to convey. Regarding the involvement load, the need and search components were the same as those in the second task. Inasmuch as the students were provided with the explanations and definitions of idioms, the search component was zero. The value of evaluation, however, was higher than those of evaluation in the first and second tasks because the idioms were to be used in the context originally developed by the students making more effort to create the text. Hence, the involvement load of the task was 3 (+ (1) need, (0) search, ++ (2) evaluation) (See appendix C3)

Table 1: The degrees of the components in the involvement load of the tasks in the present study

Tasks	Degrees of the Involvement Load	Explanations
Task 1 (multiple-choice test)	Index 3 <i>Moderate need, search, & evaluation</i>	The students felt the need to know the word. (1) <i>need</i> The students looked the idioms up. (1) <i>search</i> The idioms were compared with other idioms in the provided context and test. (1) <i>evaluation</i>
Task 2 (fill-in-the blank test)	Index 2 <i>Moderate need & evaluation</i>	The students were provided with definitions and explanation of the idioms. (0) <i>search</i> The students needed to know meanings of the idioms provided. (1) <i>Need</i> The students had to decide on idioms contextual appropriateness. (1) <i>evaluation</i>
Task 3 (sentence-making) Search	Index 3 <i>Moderate need & strong evaluation</i>	The students were provided with definitions and explanation of the idioms. (0) <i>search</i> The students needed to know meanings of the idioms provided. (1) <i>Need</i> The students were to create a text and context by developing originally new sentences with the idioms. (2) <i>evaluation</i>

5. Results and findings

In order to check their level of proficiency, the participants were required to take QPT. Table 2 presents the findings of group statistics for the QPT. To select homogenous sample, a total number of 73 EFL learners were selected from among 92 EFL learners.

Table 2: Statistics of QPT for having homogenized students

N	Valid	92
	Missing	0
Mean		29.77
Std. Deviation		5.819
Skewness		1.084
Std. Error of Skewness		.241
Kurtosis		.213
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478
Sum		2977

Based on QPT direction, those who scored within the range of 24 to 30 (pre-intermediates) on the test were selected as the participants of the study. However, as mentioned earlier, 13 participants were crossed out of the study due to their familiarity of the idioms. Thus, 60 students took part in the study.

Regarding the descriptive data for the pretest (Table 3), it was found that the mean scores of the groups were approximately at the same level, and the results of the one-way ANOVA test in Table 4 below showed that the Sig. ratio of the proficiency scores is ($f(3,116) = 0.014$, $p = 0.998$). Therefore, it demonstrated that there was not a significant difference among the three classes.

Table 3: Descriptive data for the pretest of the classes

Tasks and Classes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Class 1)	20	13.97	3.89	0.74
Task2 (Gap-fill) (Class 2)	20	13.93	3.59	0.68
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Class 3)	20	14.02	4.02	0.73
Total	60	13.97	3.83	0.71

Table 4: ANOVA test of within classes' effects for pretest scores

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Classes	0.625	3	0.208	0.014	0.998
Within Classes	1762.367	116	15.193		
Total	1762.992	119			

According to the means displayed in Table 5, participants in task 3 outperformed the other two groups on both immediate posttests.

Table 5: The immediate posttest of the groups (descriptive data)

Tasks and Classes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Class 1)	20	33.52	2.22	0.85
Task2 (Gap-fill) (Class 1)	20	35.14	2.49	0.81
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Class 1)	20	36.56	3.01	0.89
Total	60	35.07	2.57	0.85

In order to determine if the differences were significant, the scores of each immediate posttest were then subjected to a one-way ANOVA. As Table 6 illustrates, the mean score for task 3 (36.56), is higher than the mean scores for the other groups. It indicated that participants in task 3 performed better than the participants in other two groups. And, the mean score for task 2 (35.14) was higher than the mean score of task 1 (33.52).

Table 6: ANOVA tests of within groups' effects for immediate posttest scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	125.12	3	49.13	4.49	0.001
Within groups	487.25	78	5.79		
Total	612.37	81			

As it is demonstrated in Table 6, the ANOVA results for the first question indicated a statistically significant difference among the performances of the groups on the immediate test ($f(3, 78) = 4.49, p = 0.001$). Therefore, the results confirmed that task 3 among other tasks with different degrees of involvement load indicated higher significant effect than the other tasks on promoting learners' idiom learning.

Table 7 demonstrates the data on descriptive statistics for the performances of the groups on the delayed posttest. It indicated that the mean score for task 3 (31.25) was higher than the mean scores for the other groups. This revealed that participants in task 3 outperformed the participants in other two groups.

Table 7: The delayed posttest of the groups (descriptive data)

Tasks and Classes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Class 1)	20	30.12	3.28	0.59
Task 2 (Gap-fill) (Class 2)	20	29.59	2.62	0.52
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Class 3)	20	31.25	2.14	0.49
Total	60	30.32	2.68	0.53

As it is demonstrated in Table 8, the ANOVA results for the second question indicated a statistically significant difference among the performances of the groups on the delayed posttest ($f(3, 78) = 10.21, p = 0.00$). Therefore, the results confirmed that task3 among other tasks with different degrees of involvement load indicated higher significant effect than the other tasks on promoting learners' idiom learning.

Table 8: ANOVA test of within groups' effects for delayed posttest scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	192.36	3	75.17	10.21	0.00
Within groups	397.85	78	4.71		
Total	590.21	81			

As a post-hoc analysis, the scores were submitted to a Paired samples *t* test to see if the mean differences were significant. As demonstrated in Table 9, the mean differences of all tasks were significant at $q < .001$. It is also clear that there was a decrease in the means for tasks in the immediate and delayed posttests (Tables 5 and 7).

Table 9: Paired samples *t* test for the means between immediate and delayed posttests

Pairs	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.
Glossing (im. & del.) (Class 1)	7.79	2.29	8.022	29	.000
Gap-fill (im. & del.) (Class 2)	8.19	2.40	7.69	22	.000
Sentence-making (im. & del.) (Class 3)	8.57	1.59	9.852	28	.000

However, according to Table 9, the results of the post-hoc analysis of the mean differences among the three classes in both immediate-test and delayed posttest show that there was a significant difference between the score of the task 3 group and the other two groups. As well, the mean difference between scores of the task 3 and the task 1 was significant. Therefore, it can be declared that task 3 had an effect on learning and retention of new idioms incidentally in EFL classes.

6. Discussion and conclusion

In the present study, the main issue posed was whether Iranian EFL learners' idiom learning would be improved through employing different task types based on ILH. Thus, the present study investigated what types of tasks can be practically used when teaching idiomatic expressions to learners of English. The research question '*Does task-induced involvement have any statistically significant effect on the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' initial learning and retention of English idiom?*' was analyzed through comparing

means and a one-way ANOVA (See Tables 4, 5, 6 & 7). From among the different tasks, task 3 designated more significant effect on increasing incidental idiom learning of Iranian EFL learners. Based on the results of one-way ANOVA and comparison of means, the hypothesis that task-induced involvement has no statistically significant effect on the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' initial learning and retention of English idiom, cannot be confirmed.

The results are in line with the experiments done by Peng (2011, 2012) that sentence-making that required higher load involvement yielded better and longer learning and retention of idioms. In addition, the results were supported by the study conducted by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001a), Kim (2011) that higher load involvement contributes to longer retention of vocabulary.

Similarly, the participants in the present study learned more idioms through task 3 that necessitated higher level of involvement load. That is, the sentence-making participants achieved higher scores both on the immediate and delayed posttests than the glossing (task1) and gap-fill (task 2) participants although the glossing participants outperformed the gap-fill participants significantly. This is in contrast with Hulstijn and Laufer's (2001a, b) assumption that every component is equally effective when specifying the involvement index for vocabulary tasks. However, as

It needs to be mentioned that there was a dip after a period of two-week interval between two tests; that is, the performance of all groups had a significant decline from the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest. This finding is in harmony with Hulstijn and Laufer (2001a, b) who argue that one expects a decline in knowledge over time in the absence of rehearsal or additional exposure to the target words between testing intervals. Thus, it is not surprising that there would be a decline in knowledge for the task that initially showed the greatest gains.

Although all three tasks were hypothesized to have the same involvement index (3), the three groups differed in their posttest scores. For instance, the results of task 3 indicated that on the immediate posttest, the scores of the task 1 were significantly lower than the other two groups, although there was no significant difference between the sentence completion group and the sentence writing group. This suggests that, since learners implement a variety of strategies when trying to interpret the meaning of idioms, they should also be given the opportunity to develop and practice these. This issue is supported by Kim (2011) who notes that the different degrees of each individual component (moderate and strong; need, search, and evaluation) contributing to an overall involvement load, might not be the same.

The effect of explicit instruction and devised tasks in classroom settings has been generally agreed upon in SLA research (Long, 1990), and that learning meaning

requires explicit instruction because it requires conscious processing on semantic and conceptual levels and conscious form-to-meaning connection (Ellis, 1994; Ellis & He, 1999), the researchers, however, are not unanimous on what tasks promote the learning. ILH argues against what Long and Ellis believed. It supports incidental learning of meaning by activating deeper mental processing levels. In addition, various experiments including the present one have supported the ILH.

It is worth mentioning that illustrating how tasks facilitate L2 idiom learning effectively in classroom language teaching is of prime importance. One of the major ways of researching techniques of idiom teaching and learning is doing experimental comparisons of activities in learning idioms. Learning new idioms as a by-product of a non-idiom activity or incidental idiom learning can take place when students read, listen, speak and write.

Teacher can design with various tasks that require a higher load index. In an academic situation where learners practice sentence-making and composition, designing tasks in which the learners are required to use idioms in sentence or a combination of sentences can facilitate better learning and longer retention of idioms.

About the authors



Mehrnoush Ataafarin is currently M.A. in TEFL. She is also an IELTS instructor in English language institutes. She is interested in doing research on teaching and learning English and technology integration in TEFL.



Ghasem Aghajanzadeh Kiasi is a faculty member at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch. His research interests are teaching English, language teacher education, syllabus design, and technology integration in TEFL. He has published articles in the area of TEFL and teacher education, and some English textbooks at university levels.

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Appendix A

Task 1: Read the text carefully and answer the multiple questions the follow.

My successful friend

My friend, Doug, has really done well for himself in life. I'm very proud of him and all of his achievements! We get together every year or so for a two or three day hike in Oregon. It's a great time to reflect on how life is going, talk about old times and have new adventures. Let me tell you a little bit about Doug.

It was clear from the very beginning that he was-----1------. He did very well in school, and everyone knew he was a-----2------. Not only were his grades good, but he was also an outstanding athlete, as well as-----3------. Some accused him of being-----4-----, but that didn't bother him. He wasn't going to let anyone -----5-----!

After he graduated from college, he decided to go to New York. As the song goes: "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere!" Back in those days, New York was ----6-----of innovation. Doug was a product design specialist and had some great designs-----7-----.

Unfortunately, he didn't immediately succeed. Things weren't easy in the beginning, and it took him a while to learn the -----8-----of the-----9------. In any case, it soon became so clear to him that he needed to make some -----10-----with his director. He decided he would volunteer to create the presentation for a new product at the company's yearly-----11-----.

The boss wasn't so sure, but the decision about who would make the presentation wasn't-----12------. In the end, the manager decided that Doug would do a good job. Doug gladly accepted the challenge and decided to make quite an impression. He wasn't exactly going to-----13-----, but he knew he could improve on past presentations. He felt that giving a great presentation would improve his standing in the company.

The day of the presentation arrived, and, no surprise, Doug did an outstanding job. His presentation was informative, and he didn't-----14------. Where there were problems, he pointed them out and made suggestions as to how to improve the situation. Long story short, because of his excellent presentation the director realized that he was the-----15------. Doug started taking more and more responsibility at the company. Within three years, he had sealed the deal on development of two of his best ideas. As they say, the rest is history.

1.	a. going places c. doing wrong	b. going bananas d. taking steps
2.	a. bottomless pit c. smart cookie	b. bread winner d. a boy in blue
3.	a. blowing the doors off c. blowing his stack	b. keeping his nose clean d. biting the dust
4.	a. squeaky clean c. behind bars	b. big cheese d. bean brain
5.	a. has rocks in his head c. has a screw loose	b. rain on his parade d. has a screw loose
6.	a. a last straw c. a pea brain	b. an old hat d. a hotbed
7.	a. on the block c. on tap	b. on hand d. on a dime
8.	a. ins and outs c. skin and bones	b. ship-shape d. snow job
9.	a. spring chicken c. Bean Town	b. tight spot d. Big Apple
10.	a. bumper-to-bumper c. cans of worms	b. brownie points d. charley horses
11.	a. dog and pony show c. cold hard cash	b. clean bill of health d. slap in the face
12.	a. in the bag c. carved in stone	b. a gravy train d. a heavyweight
13.	a. lay an egg c. lift a finger	b. knuckle down d. reinvent the wheel
14.	a. blow any smoke c. lose face	b. light it up d. blow off steam
15.	a. goody two-shoes c. glad-hand	b. genuine article d. grease monkey

Appendix B

Task 2: Read the text carefully and fill in the blanks with the idioms provided above.

Big Apple = New York New York

blow smoke = to fake or provide false information in order to gain something

brownie points = extra good will

carved in stone = not changeable

dog and pony show = a presentation during which a company's best products are shown

genuine article = real true not fake

go places = to become successful

hotbed of something = an area that is famous for a certain type of industry or success

ins and outs = the details and inside information about a place or situation

keep one's nose clean = to not make any illegal or unethical mistakes

on tap = ready

rain on someone's parade = to criticize the success of someone

reinvent the wheel = to remake or invent something that already exists

smart cookie = very intelligent person

squeaky clean = without fault not having problems or mistakes

My successful friend

My friend, Doug, has really done well for himself in life. I'm very proud of him and all of his achievements! We get together every year or so for a two or three day hike in Oregon. It's a great time to reflect on how life is going, talk about old times and have new adventures. Let me tell you a little bit about Doug.

It was clear from the very beginning that he was-----1------. He did very well in school, and everyone knew he was a-----2------. Not only were his grades good, but he was also an outstanding athlete, as well as-----3------. Some accused him of being-----4------, but that didn't bother him. He wasn't going to let anyone -----5-----!

After he graduated from college, he decided to go to New York. As the song goes: "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere!" Back in those days, New York was ---6-----of innovation. Doug was a product design specialist and had some great designs----7-----.

Unfortunately, he didn't immediately succeed. Things weren't easy in the beginning, and it took him a while to learn the -----8-----of the-----9------. In any case, it soon became so clear to him that he needed to make some -----10----- with his director. He decided he would volunteer to create the presentation for a new product at the company's yearly-----11-----.

The boss wasn't so sure, but the decision about who would make the presentation wasn't-----12------. In the end, the manager decided that Doug would do a good job. Doug gladly accepted the challenge and decided to make quite an

impression. He wasn't exactly going to-----13-----, but he knew he could improve on past presentations. He felt that giving a great presentation would improve his standing in the company.

The day of the presentation arrived, and, no surprise, Doug did an outstanding job. His presentation was informative, and he didn't-----14----- . Where there were problems, he pointed them out and made suggestions as to how to improve the situation. Long story short, because of his excellent presentation the director realized that he was the-----15----- . Doug started taking more and more responsibility at the company. Within three years, he had sealed the deal on development of two of his best ideas. As they say, the rest is history.

Appendix C

Task 3: Read the text carefully and make sentence (s) with idioms in bold face. Note that the English definitions and their Persian equivalents are given. You can use some idioms in one or more related sentences.

My successful friend

My friend, Doug, has really done well for himself in life. I'm very proud of him and all of his achievements! We get together every year or so for a two or three day hike in Oregon. It's a great time to reflect on how life is going, talk about old times and have new adventures. Let me tell you a little bit about Doug.

It was clear from the very beginning that he was **going places**. He did very well in school, and everyone knew he was a **smart cookie**. Not only were his grades good, but he was also an outstanding athlete, as well as **keeping his nose clean**. Some accused him of being **squeaky clean**, but that didn't bother him. He wasn't going to let anyone **rain on his parade**!

After he graduated from college, he decided to go to New York. As the song goes: "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere!" Back in those days, New York was a **hotbed of** innovation. Doug was a product design specialist and had some great designs **on tap**.

Unfortunately, he didn't immediately succeed. Things weren't easy in the beginning, and it took him a while to learn the **ins and outs** of the **Big Apple**. In any case, it soon became so clear to him that he needed to make some **brownie points** with his director. He decided he would volunteer to create the presentation for a new product at the company's yearly **dog and pony show**.

The boss wasn't so sure, but the decision about who would make the presentation wasn't **carved in stone**. In the end, the manager decided that Doug would do a good job. Doug gladly accepted the challenge and decided to make quite an impression. He wasn't exactly going to **reinvent the wheel**, but he knew he could improve on past presentations. He felt that giving a great presentation would improve his standing in the company.

The day of the presentation arrived, and, no surprise, Doug did an outstanding job. His presentation was informative, and he didn't **blow any smoke**. Where there were problems, he pointed them out and made suggestions as to how to improve the situation. Long story short, because of his excellent presentation the director realized that he was the **genuine article**. Doug started taking more and more responsibility at the company. Within three years, he had sealed the deal on development of two of his best ideas. As they say, the rest is history.

Big Apple = New York

نیو یورک

blow smoke = to fake or provide false information in order to gain something

جعل کردن اطلاعات برای بدست آوردن چیزی

brownie points = extra good will

خوش نیتی

carved in stone = not changeable

ثابت و غیر قابل تغییر

dog and pony show = a presentation during which a company's best products are shown

نمایش کالا های درجه یک یک شرکت و کارخانه

genuine article = real true not fake

عالی- خیلی خوب- واقعی

go places = to become successful

موفق شدن

hotbed of something = an area that is famous for a certain type of industry or success

زمینه مناسب و مساعد تجارت و کار اقتصادی

ins and outs = the details and inside information about a place or situation

اطلاعات و جزئیات در مورد یک مکان و موقعیت

keep one's nose clean = to not make any illegal or unethical mistakes

وارد کارهای خلاف و غیر قانونی نشدن

on tap = ready

آماده و فراهم

rain on someone's parade = to criticize the success of someone

موفقیت کسی را تایید نکردن – زیر سوال بردن موفقیت کسی

reinvent the wheel = to remake or invent something that already exists

ساختن و درست کردن مجدد چیزی

smart cookie = very intelligent person

شخص باهوش و زیرک

squeaky clean = without fault not having problems or mistakes

بی نقص و کامل

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